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# The application of closed list proportional representation in Angola and Mozambique: A case study of the impact of electoral system in democratization.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The general overview of this work is to contribute to a better understanding of how countries in the process of democratic transition such as Angola and Mozambique, with similar historical and political backgrounds and using the same national list-Proportional Representation (**PR**) electoral system, produce such different political outcomes. This requires engaging with the particular historical and political contexts of both countries.

In addition, this work strives to add new dimensions to the topic of democratic transition by undertaking an enquiry into the impact that elections should have or should not have on the consolidation of democracy. This enquiry also goes further by questioning what if elections are not sufficient to consolidate democracies? What are then the conditions needed to make such development possible?

The focus of this discussion is the National list-**PR** electoral system**.**Therefore, it is important first to look at the general conceptualisation of the variants of the List **PR**, in order to better understand the overall electoral system families and in particular the **PR** system. Before that discussion, the practicality of the electoral system must be dealt with. The electoral system, in practical terms, translates the votes cast in a general election, into seats in the legislature and this determines those who are elected and the party that will rule.

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Elections are important because they can dictate or shape the outcome of a democratic transition or reinforce the consolidation of a democratic government. Elections are about the process of competitive politics through which the legitimate state authority is established, recognised and respected. Elections provide the voter with the means to avoid the possibility of regime change in a violent manner either through a revolution or a coup d'etat. The political parties, concerned with the elections, will have to mobilise the voters to give voice to their choices, so that democracy may be claimed to be representative of society.

Andrew Reynolds argues that there are many electoral system variations, and these can essentially be split into nine main systems which in turn fall into three main broad electoral system families as follows:

1) **PLURALITY-MAJORITY OR PLURALITY SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICT SYSTEMS,** also known as the Anglo-American electoral system is led by the First-Past-The Post (**FPTP**), or the '**Winner-takes-all**' and includes the Block Vote, the Alternative Vote (**AV**) and the Two Round. The main feature of this electoral system family is the fact that the winner is the candidate with the most votes.

2) **SEMI-PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION :** This electoral system is a mixture of two systems-The Proportional Representation List to be discussed

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further and the Plurality-Majority. The main trend in this voting system is that each elector has one vote but there are several seats in the district to be filled. It includes the Parallel and **SNTV.** The Semi-Proportional Representation system is known to lead to the exclusion of smaller parties.

3) **LIST PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (PR) :** This electoral system is considered by Reynolds to be the optimal guarantor of democratic institutions. The proportionality of the system is the basic principle for adequate and better representation. The aim is to reduce the disparity between a party's share of the national vote and its share of the Parliamentary seats as well as to minimise or eliminate the wasted votes. For instance, if a major party wins 40% of the votes it should win approximately 40% of the seats in the Parliament. The main feature of this system is that each party is required to present a list of candidates to the electorate. In other words, party managers prepare and manage the party list with the names of the candidates for the National Assembly. The voters vote for a party, and the parties receive seats in proportion to the overall share of the national vote. Winning candidates are taken from party lists in order of their position on such lists. Thus the candidates who are likely to be elected are those placed as high on the list as possible.

The Proportional Representation (**PR**) as part of the Electoral System families also includes the Mixed Member Proportional (**MMP)** and Single Transferable Vote ( **STV)** as its variants. The **MMP** most used in New Zealand and Germany, means that a

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proportion of the Parliament is elected by Plurality-Majority while the remainder constitutes **PR** lists. One of the advantages of the **MMP** is that the list **PR** seats can compensate for any disproportionality produced by any geographical voting seat results. It is also said that the **MMP** in translating votes into seats can be as proportional as the pure **List PR**, and this can cause the **MMP** to have to bear all the advantages and disadvantages of Proportional Representation.

The other variant of the List **PR** is the Single Transferable Vote (**STV**) which is used in Ireland and Malta. This electoral system makes use of the multi-member districts with voters ranking candidates in order of preference on the ballot paper in the same manner as the Alternative Vote in the **First-Past-The-Post (FPTP)**. As a mechanism of choosing representatives, the **STV** allows for choice between parties and between candidates within parties. Some of the benefits resulting from this electoral system, are that the final electoral outcomes reflect a reasonable degree of proportionality and fairness. It provides the geographical link between voter and representative. It also offers space for the election of popular, independent candidates, because voters choose between candidates rather than between parties in the List **PR**. This being so, it can lead political parties to fragment internally because at election time, members of the same party may compete against each other as well as against the opposition.

At a more theoretical level, Reynolds evaluates the merits of the **PR** system from various case studies in Southern Africa that have different political backgrounds and different demographic and economic contexts and had a successful transition to democracy. He

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argues that the **PR** system should be retained as it contributes substantially to the widening and deepening of democracy.

Reynolds' thinking of Southern Africa is underpinned by the question of inclusion versus exclusion not only at an individual but also at a segmental group level, encompassing many collective interests formed in religious, regional, racial, ethnic and gender terms.

Based on Guinier (1994); Sisk (1994): Przeworski (1991) and Horowitz (1991), Reynolds (1994) argues that the key to political stability in divided societies revolves around the concept of inclusion derived from enduring constitutions which reduce the stakes of political battles or in power-sharing agreements that result in broad-based governing structures. Such structures include all major ethnic groups in society and reconcile claims for any ethnic group self-determination.

Reynolds goes further by asserting that inclusive structures as a confidence building mechanism between both minorities and majorities, allow them to feel that they have an influence on the decision-making process, and that their representatives are able to ensure that their rights are protected. In addition, these structures facilitate a better distribution of resources from the centre to the country as a whole.

With regard to the List **PR** system, Reynolds argues that in divided societies, like in most Southern African countries, the List **PR** ensures representativeness of all the opinions of

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the electorate, both the majority and the minority. It provides accessibility to people and makes them feel that their votes have an impact on change within the system. It promotes incentives that facilitate an environment of compromise and reconciliation in terms of mutual recognition of opposing views in the political system. It also ensures that the government and elected members are accountable to their constituents.

Reynolds' stand on both the prospects for democratic consolidation in a divided society and the **List PR** electoral system as a mechanism, encourages and increases political parties representation across racial, ethnic and linguistic frontiers. He poses these advantages as being more useful in a new democracy rather than those that arise from an electoral system such as majoritarianism which solely ensures a close relationship between voters and representatives and which encourages local accountability.

In line with Reynolds, and in order to create a climate of cooperation, moderation and accommodation in which emerging democracies can survive, Lijphart, (1990:1991) argues in favour of the **List PR** as the appropriate type of electoral system to induce candidates and political parties to moderate their appeals and forge alliance across racial, ethnic or ideological lines.

Reynolds, expanding his thought in '*Voting for a New South Africa'* (1993:130) unequivocally stands in favour of proportional representation as an electoral system that creates "… a legislature which is representative, accountable and dynamic, which gives

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voters effective choice and a clear method of voting and which engenders an air of reconciliation and compromise in the best interest of the country".[1]

In analysing South Africa context, as a **PR** successful case study, Reynolds expresses that plurality system does not facilitate the development of a multi-party system as the two-party system would not allow the different views of the South African society to be adequately represented in Parliament. Equally, majoritarianism seems to be unrepresentative and thus unfair and this could lead to a further polarisation of South African society instead of the reconciliation so badly needed after many years of institutionalised racial oppression and discrimination through the policies of apartheid.

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## 1.1 : TITLE OF THE THESIS:

**"THE APPLICATION OF CLOSED LIST PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE: A CASE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN DEMOCRATISATION".**

## 1.2: AIM

The aim of this research is to contribute to an informed debate on over electoral systems. Elections are viewed as a complex procedure that extends beyond the single event of simple balloting and the decision- making about who wins and who loses. This work will attempt to provide a comparative analysis of electoral processes in two different countries in Southern Africa: Angola and Mozambique. It will explore why, contrary to the experience of Mozambique in 1994, the first ever Angolan multi-party electoral experience in 1992, under the closed list **Proportional Representation**, did not facilitate accommodation and harmony.

Both Angola and Mozambique applied the same electoral system choice, namely the Proportional Representation or **List PR** . The effect of this electoral system falls on the proportionality of the representation of political parties in Parliament. In other words, the choice of the **List PR** electoral system is conceived to ensure a more accurate degree of proportionality between votes and seats, in terms of representation in Parliament. The major aim of this research is to explore alternatives or modifications to the party list-system of Proportional Representation, in order to promote conflict resolution.

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This work tests the view that asserts, almost as a given fact, Proportional Representation as being by far the best and most fair, among the family of electoral systems choices for any post-conflict setting, as it creates a friendly climate of cooperation and peaceful transition to democracy.

By looking at the trajectories of one party state politics under the leadership of Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola **(MPLA)** and Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (**FRELIMO)**, in Angola and Mozambique, this work seeks to provide an understanding of electoral factors, such as the lack of electoral incentives, economic potentialities, electoral technical and political conditions and the transformation of armed political parties into merely political parties, all of which are often overlooked or not explored in depth in the study of elections in Africa.

Therefore, the main task of this research will be to demonstrate that the results of the empirical research on these two case studies test the theoretical assumptions of leading scholars who favour the **PR** system as the best electoral system choice. As Lijphart, 1991-91 puts it: "The electoral system of **PR** is by far the most powerful lever of constitutional engineering for accommodation and harmony in severely divided societies, as indeed it is a powerful tool for many other purposes"[2]. For Reynolds, "…During the 'Third Wave of democratization, i.e., that plurality or majoritarian system are detrimental to democratic consolidation in ethnically divided fledgling democracies and that proportional representational type systems are necessary to provide the inclusive ground rules to enable party compromise and ethnic accommodation to flourish"[3].

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The underlining arguments put forward by Lijphart and Reynolds assume that in societies such as Angola and Mozambique with deep divisions and animosity between different groups of people, the impact of the List of Proportional Representation, is fairness, inclusiveness, representativeness and political stability. This study will test these arguments.

The importance of elections is aptly expressed out by Samuel Huntington (1991:174): "Elections are the way democracy operates. In the Third Wave they were also a way of weakening and ending authoritarian regimes. They were a vehicle of democratization as well as the goal of democratization. Democratization was brought about by authoritarian rulers who, for one reason or another, ventured to hold elections, and by opposition groups who pushed for elections and participated in them. The lessons of the Third Wave is that elections are not only the life of democracy; they are also the death of dictatorship"[4].

It is crucial, therefore, to note some conceptual differences between elections and electoral systems. Elections serve to recruit and select political leadership, in order to put in place an orderly succession of government. They should not serve as a springboard for the tyranny of the majority.

On the other hand, the electoral system is a method or a set of rules governing the process that can ensure domestic and international legitimacy and credibility by renewing the mandate or replacing the incumbent government by another in an orderly manner. Thus,

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the electoral system, in practical terms, translates the votes cast in a general election into seats in the legislature and this determines those who are elected and the party that will rule.

The main research question for this research is whether we understand the political settlement and relatively stable politics of modern Mozambique on the one hand, and on the other hand, the enduring conflict since 1992 in Angola, as both being partly the consequences of the adoption of a particular electoral system, i.e. the National List of Proportional Representation? If this is the case, why did similar electoral arrangements lead to such different outcomes?

Related questions are:

-How far did the use of the Proportional Representation contribute to the development of democracy in Angola and Mozambique?

-In a war-torn country like Angola, would the PR electoral incentives have been sufficient to prevent the post-electoral crisis? If not, which other variants of PR electoral system choice would be suitable to provide for different political outcomes?

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## 1.3: RATIONALE

The rationale of this research is twofold. First, the research seeks to investigate the link between the electoral systems family and electoral system choice of list Proportional Representation. Second, the research strives through updated findings to contribute to the international debate on electoral systems theory by focusing on how elections held in Angola in 1992 and in Mozambique in 1994 are related to democratisation, by examining the political impact of institutional design and constitutional engineering. Democratisation is defined as a process that not only features forms and procedures like holding elections but gives substantive meaning to civil, and political and socio-economic rights.

## 1.4: LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation will draw on a range of literature on the Electoral Systems family. Thus, this literature review begins by assessing theories of the Proportional Representation and evaluates the merits of the various arguments raised by key scholars in the field such as Andrew Reynolds and Arend Lijphart. It must be said that the pure proportional system began to be highly appreciated in many European countries at the inception of the twentieth century, especially in societies with a high degree of heterogeneity caused by long years of animosity and civil war. The underlying principle is that in a given society with a high level of political intolerance, proportional representation is a user-friendly

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electoral system that promotes a climate of cooperation and coalition rather than a "divisive political culture of permanent majorities and minorities"[5].

Many prominent scholars of the electoral process have argued strongly in favour of the introduction of the **PR** system in many countries by stressing that the purpose was to achieve greater proportionality and better minority representation which earlier majoritarian electoral methods have not produced. For instance, Reynolds views the **PR** electoral system as a tool for democratic consolidation in a divided society and as a mechanism that encourages and increases political parties representation across racial, ethnic and linguistic frontiers, rather than an electoral system which solely ensures a close relationship between voters and representatives, which encourages local accountability. Reynolds' argument goes further in *Voting for a New South Africa* (1993:130) by unequivocally standing in favour of proportional representation as an electoral system that creates "…a legislature which is representative, accountable and dynamic, which gives voters effective choice and a clear method of voting and which engenders an air of reconciliation and compromise in the best interest of the country"[6].

Reilly (2000:21), arguing on the need for party list **PR,** makes the point that in divided societies, the electoral system-design of Proportional Representation enables all politically significant ethnic groups, including minorities, to define themselves into ethnically based parties. The distinguishing feature of the **PR** system is to produce multi-party systems and multi-party parliaments, in which all significant segments of the population can be represented.

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Reilly's argument goes further in Ethnic Groups in Conflict and A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society (1991 a) by putting forward the ideas of Donald Horowitz (1985) which emphasise that the **PR** system is essential to the survival of democracy not only to give minorities adequate representation, because that would simply replicate existing ethnic divisions in the legislature, but rather to transcend the political salience of ethnicity by encouraging and promoting cooperation and accommodation between rival parties which will help to break down the claims of narrow parochialism or regionalism. This requires parties to present ethnically mixed slates of candidates for election and making voters choose between them on issues other than ethnicity. This accommodative behaviour rewards parties whose strategy is clearly to reach out to voters from other than clan or tribal groups.

Matlosa (2002:18), assessing the tenets and features of the **PR** system and its implications for the election outcome, highlights that under this electoral system the whole country is considered as one single constituency for the election, hence there is no need for the delimitation of election boundaries. This is contrary to a constituency-based system in which voters' choice is bound by geographically confined electoral zones. The **PR** system is driven by the opinions and inclinations of the voters regarding ideologies and manifestoes of contesting parties. Therefore, candidates do not contest elections as individuals, but as party candidates appearing on a prepared list. Thus, members of parliament are accountable to the party rather than the voters. As Jackson and Jackson (1999:373) put it: "essentially, … in all party list systems the election is primarily to

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ensure that the legislature reflects the relative popularity of the parties: individual candidates are of a secondary concern"[7].

Mackay (1999) partly echoing in favour of list **PR** argues that this electoral system ensures minority representation in the country's legislatures, but that it loosens the crucially important ties between the constituents and parliamentarians. In other words, the **PR** system provides too little to empower voters and constituencies and this may provide room for "crossing of the floor by elected representatives from constituencies which would make for more fluidity and compromise in the political system".[8]

However, Reilly (1990:262-263) in the same vein and assessing electoral requirements of transitional and consolidated democracies, and based on Blais and Dion's survey of transitions to democracy of 19 states between 1900-1985, argues that **SMCs** are to be preferred to proportional systems with respect to the consolidation of fragile democracies and that national list **PR** should be avoided at all costs, for the **PR** system does not provide a higher degree of responsiveness to the needs of the electorate and to the promotion of a sense of 'ownership' by the electorate. In other words, the **PR** system does not ensure the accountability of the members of parliament to the electorate while subjecting them to the dictates of the party leadership. The winner is determined by a calculation of total proportion of votes of each party, relative to the overall valid votes cast.

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In this respect, Reilly (1998) suggested that any country like South Africa, in condition of transitional and consolidated democracy, should adopt a district-based system of which **SMC** is the most appropriate one. According to Reilly, **SMCs** are simply better suited to cater for local issues and needs in a personalised and accountable manner, a style of politics which pure list **PR** by its very nature can not do.

Reilly (1997:223) expands his views further by using Bohrer's findings, that less proportional electoral laws are more successful at maintaining democracy than **PR** systems; proportionality in itself may not necessarily be the culprit, but it is more often associated with democratic failure than less proportional systems.

Reilly's suggestions are based on the studies of the 36 'established democracies'whose states have populations larger than 250,000 and have an uninterrupted democratic rule for at least 20 years. Fifty nine percent of these states use some form of the **PR** system. Yet in terms of population totals, more people live in states using the **FPTP** system than all the various systems combined. In these established democracies, Reilly argues, more people live under the **MMP** system that use **SMCs** than under pure list PR systems. However, only two established democracies in Africa, namely Botswana and Mauritius, use versions of the **FPTP** systems.

On the other hand, Reynolds'conceptualisation of the **PR** system, rests on the idea that a plurality system does not facilitate the development of a multi-party system as the two-party system, would not allow the different views of wider and fractured societies, like Angola and Mozambique, to be adequately represented in Parliament. Reynolds

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substantiates his argument for the **PR** system by emphasizing that in such divided societies, the appeal for majoritarianism or semi-proportional representation, made up of a mixture of **PR** list and the plurality-majority, would be unrepresentative and unfair and this could lead to further polarisation of the incumbent societies claiming for reconciliation, badly needed after long years of violent conflict, and also because it could lead to the exclusion of smaller parties.

Lijphart (1977; 1985;1990;1991) in line with Reynolds' flow of thought argues in favour of the List PR as the appropriate type of electoral system to induce candidates and political parties to moderate their appeals and forge alliances across racial, ethnic and ideological lines. Lijphart regards proportionality as the means to prevent the permanent exclusion of minority groups from political power in plural or divided societies. Hence, proportionality creates space for power-sharing and broad-based societal support for democracy by promoting representation and giving all parts of the community substantive political power. Lijphart also advocates that the PR system creates a climate of cooperation, moderation and accommodation in which emerging democracy can survive.

Nevertheless, the bottom line of this complex debate is nevertheless the suitability of the National list-**PR** electoral system for facilitating minority parties or groups access to representation, such as the election of women into politics. It helps to implement the principle of inclusion, which is crucial to stability in divided societies and brings all the elected representatives, across the board, into the decision-making process. The virtues of

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this model are primarily accommodation and compromise along racial, ethnic and ideological lines. In other words, it is a conflict-reducing electoral structure that serves the multiracial and multi-ethnic society. It breaks away from the source of division and provides incentives for politicians to appeal beyond their communal bases for support. The system of **PR** is consistent with the principle of nation-building, national unity and reconciliation since it protects individuals against divisive and discriminatory trends and practices, and offers the grounds for political compromises with respect to a greater accommodation of minorities.

## 1.5 METHODOLOGY

My fieldwork aimed at distributing open-ended questionnaires, started 25 November, 2002 and ended 11 December, 2002 in Mozambique.Whereas in Angola, it took place from 28 January, to 15 February 2003.

The questionnaires were designed to produce written or oral structured responses lasting roughly to fifteen or twenty minutes. My aim was to make the questionnaire produce, as much as possible, both open-ended and finite results. The questionnaire was structured in order to give insights to the respondent as much as he or she could remember in relation with to the founding elections that took place in Angola in 1992 and in Mozambique in 1994.

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A selection of questionnaires was conducted with key informants, voters from grass-root levels and political opposition parties represented in Parliament. During my fieldwork a number of questions was set up, such as what the meaning was of the first elections ever and how the polling reflected the voters' free choice, how it contributed to conflict-management mechanism and whether the voter had made an intended choice, independently and not unduly influenced by his or her ignorance, illiteracy or fear. An assurance of confidentiality to all respondents had to be provided for. The questionnaires conducted in written form, provided reasonable material on which to base an extensive account of the context and roots of the people's and parties' political attitudes and how this affected the elections outcomes in Angola and Mozambique.

In order to achieve the aim of this dissertation, I distributed open-ended questionnaires in Angola and Mozambique which were supplemented with published reports, newspapers and statistical material on the election results in these two countries.

Despite the establishment of peace in these two countries, there is still a mutual political fear. In general, the encounters with my informants may have contributed to an environment based on trust and mutual respect, and which induced enthusiasm and reduced the degree of suspicion among the interviewees with regard to my intended use of the accorded data.

I submitted my questionnaires in Portuguese, one of the official languages in Angola as well as in Mozambique. There was no need to resort to any ethnic language group in

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either country. I did my fieldwork without a translator and this encouraged the respondents to produce a free-flowing discourse which reached certain aspects of their lives and perceptions about the political development in their countries.

Certainly, my status as an academic researcher affiliated with an external university gave me the necessary credibility before the respondents, for them to volunteer a wealth of information that would be important to a broader understanding of the post-electoral crisis in Angola and a peaceful transition in Mozambique.

Some obstacles were encountered during this fieldwork, e.g. Angola and Mozambique. There was a significant non-response rate to my request to answer the questionnaires, especially in Angola, partly due to the time constraint of my fieldwork which was just two weeks after the New Year's festivities. During which that time people and prospective respondents were still struggling to settle themselves emotionally with the nostalgia of the Christmas' and New Year's holidays and the sense of duty required at their place of work. In Mozambique, with the same time span, I experienced the same difficulties though in lesser degree, partly because the fieldwork was conducted on the eve of the Christmas festive season, during which people and prospective respondents were generally busy with shopping sprees and travel arrangements for holiday destinations.

During the questionnaire process it was found that some respondents did not answer some questions given their technical specificity. From of all the respondents only one

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volunteered to produce an oral interview and this happened in Angola. Perhaps, this might be the result of the fact that the same respondent had had the opportunity to work as the National Director of the Angolan National Electoral Commission.

Generally the age of respondents varied from 24 to 65. Respondents were involved in a wide variety of occupations: University lecturers and students, parliamentarians, political parties'members, secondary school teachers and people from the general public.

The method followed during my fieldwork was that, after the submission of the questionnaire of which the first version was in English which was then translated into Portuguese, was given out to selected respondents by a preliminary contact to be followed up by a telephone conversation or a personal visit at which time the request for receiving back the answered questionnaire would be set up. Before handing out the questionnaires I had to meet with the informants to explain the research aims and the need for answering the questionnaire. The informants had the option of completing the questionnaire or being interviewed.

The submission of the questionnaire to the prospective respondent was supported by the a letter from the University of the Witwatersrand acknowledging the approval of my proposal by the Committee, as well as my personal business card being attached to the questionnaire. Within three days I would follow up with phone calls to the prospective respondents. Despite all this personal insistence and phoning, very few returned answered questionnaires.

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In some cases, empty promises were made by the prospective respondents, e.g. available only after three days, but in spite of more than three visits made at different dates and times, the respondents still could not be found at office. Finally answers were to be forwarded via Internet (E-mail). All this resulted in a delay of six months, from Angola.

Furthermore, in Angola, two important books were used in the discussion of the findings: one entitled '*Angola-White Book about Peace Process-Vol.1'* in English version, and the other is '*UNITA-What Future?'* in Portuguese version. Both books deal with the important aspects of the 1992 Angolan elections and outcomes. They provide a wide range of political opinions, ranging from support for the MPLA to support for UNITA and FNLA and other minority parties in Angola.

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